Style Guide
for Electronic Case Filing
August 2004

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Introduction

This guide contains the preferred style practices for all users of the CM/ECF application in the District of Idaho. The intention of the guide is to make everyone's task easier, whether they are entering data or inquiring into the CM/ECF data base, or uploading a proposed order. The application of a common set of styles when creating docket entries results in information being captured and displayed in more uniform and predictable ways, thus reducing confusion and errors. In addition, style consistency is the key to efficient searches in CM/ECF, since successful queries require very exact matches on search data including punctuation, abbreviations, and upper or lower case characters.

Adding Parties

Much of case opening in CM/ECF consists of adding the names of debtors, joint debtors, plaintiffs, and defendants to cases. As cases progress, creditors and other parties are added as well. Access to this information is vital to the court, the bar and the general public. *When adding new parties to the CM/ECF database, the names should conform with standard punctuation and spacing conventions listed in the Style Conventions for Names section of this Guide.*

Searching For Parties

Before adding any party to a case, search for that party using appropriate "search clues". If the system finds the correct name, select it to help eliminate different versions of the same party name.

Even something as simple as "United States" can cause ambiguity if everyone is entering it differently. For instance, following this style guide can help avoid "United States" being in the database also as "UNITED STATES", "U.S.", "US", "USA", "U.S.A.", or "U.S. of A." **See page 6 for examples.**

Search Strategies

CM/ECF searches are not key word searches but require exact text matches.

- Be sure to use appropriate upper and lowercase characters since the search is case sensitive.

- When searching for debtors, the more search clues you provide, the more likely you are to find the exact person you are searching for. For example, if you search for a last name of Grant, CM/ECF may return a list of a hundred parties with that last name. However, if you search for a last name of Grant with a Social Security number of 333-22-1111, CM/ECF will return a single party.

- When searching for creditors, it may be necessary to conduct multiple searches. First, search for the entire creditor name (e.g., World Communications). If that is not successful,

you can search for part of the creditor's name (e.g., World Comm or just World). If there are articles in the title such as "A" or "The," you may or may not need to include the article in the search. For example, a search request for The Timely Times may not produce a result. But a search request for Timely Times will be successful. Likewise a search for Timely Times may not produce a result; but a search for The Timely Times will be successful.

• When searching for a Party **DO NOT** use an asterisk or star at the end of the word. But an asterisk or star may be used before or within search strings as in the following:

☹ Villa*   ☺ *Agriculture*Dep

Use of the asterisk slows down the entire system. When searching for Villareal, the name will be found without using the asterisk as follows:

Villa

• An unsuccessful search for A & A Metals might be successful if you search without spaces (i.e., A&A Metals). On the other hand, an unsuccessful search for A&A Metals might be successful if you search with spaces (i.e., A & A Metals).

Search by last name "Doe", if you have parties referenced as "Jane Doe, John Doe, Doe, or Does".

Adding Debtors

• Add debtors to cases using names and addresses exactly as they appear on the petition or complaint. In most cases, you will NOT find debtors or joint debtors when you search the CM/ECF database. You will have to add them to the database and the case as a new party.

• If a debtor has a title, add the title in the "party text" box. Any title that you add as party text will show up on the face of the docket report following the name and separated by a comma.

Title Tips

1.   The name of the debtor without the title will appear in docket text.
2.   Titles will not appear on notices.
3.   Titles will appear on the face of the docket report in upper and lower case following the debtor name as shown below:

Jose Garza, Administrator of the Estate of Sylvia Garza

Alamo Limestone, a Texas Corp

Catherine V Ruiz, Official Administrator of Lottery Winnings

•   Make an entry in the SSN box or the Tax ID box even if the social security number for an individual debtor or tax identification number for a business debtor is unknown. Use the following format for unknown numbers.

    SSN: 000-00-0000
    Tax ID: 00-0000000

Adding Plaintiffs and Defendants

•   Add plaintiffs and defendants to cases using names exactly as they appear on the complaint. Or when you search for plaintiffs and defendants, you will probably find them in the database and can use the information in the database.

•   Make sure to select the plaintiff or defendant party role. If you find a plaintiff or defendant in CM/ECF with an address, delete the address fields before accepting the Party Information screen.

Adding Creditors

•   Add creditors to cases using names already in the CM/ECF database if at all possible. When you search for a creditor, you will probably find the party in the CM/ECF database. Creditors (such as Ford Motor Credit) are added to many different cases. Ideally, there should be only one Ford Motor Credit party in the CM/ECF database. This greatly simplifies searching when adding parties and querying cases.

    For instance, it is better to add Ford Motor Credit to all cases even if that is not the exact name used on a document being docketed. **The idea is to avoid adding name variations for a single creditor**. For example:

    ☺   Ford Motor Credit

    ☹   Ford Motor Credit Company   ☹   Ford Motor Company
    ☹   Ford Motor Credit Co.   ☹   Ford Motor Credit Corp.
    ☹   Ford Motor Credit Corporation   ☹   Ford Motors Credit Company
    ☹   Ford Motor Credit Company, Inc.   ☹   Ford Motor Credit Company ("FMCC")

The proliferation of different names for the same creditor makes searching frustrating and time consuming.

• When adding a creditor already in CM/ECF, do not add another mailing address for a creditor. If you find a creditor in CM/ECF with an address, delete the address fields before accepting the Party Information screen.

• Do NOT add a title for creditors.

• Make sure to select the creditor party role.

Style Conventions for Names

These style conventions apply to all names entered in the CM/ECF application.

• Use upper and lower case characters for all names and capitalize the first letter in a proper noun.

Wallace D Smith
United Services Fidelity and Guaranty

• Use single spacing between all names and initials . Do not use punctuation.

J J Jones
Smith Inc
C W Bradford Ltd

• When typing names that have upper and lower case letters or hyphens, do not insert spaces.

Patrick MacDougal
Kathleen O'Brien
Mary Smith-Baker

• If an individual does not have a middle name, leave that field blank. Do not enter "NMI" (no middle initial).

• If a party has multiple names such as Robert Kramer Johns Martin, add the extra names in the Middle Name box.

Last name: Martin
Middle name: Kramer Johns
First name: Robert

- Business names should be entered entirely in the Last Name box. Do not use the First Name or Middle Name box when entering business names.

- Do not use the ampersand sign for "and" unless it is part of a company name on the petition or pleading.

  B & D Company
  Cameron & Associates

- Enter US and USA without any spaces.

  ☺ USDA   ☹ US Department of Agriculture
  ☺ US Trustee   ☹ United States Trustee

Entering Spanish Surnames

The father's surname, or in the case of a married woman, the husband's surname, is always used as the control name.

Jose Rodolfo Ramirez-Villareal
First name: Jose
Middle name: Rodolfo
Father's surname: Ramirez
Mother's surname: Villareal

Enter: Last name: Ramirez-Villareal
                First name: Jose
                Middle name: Rodolfo

Married Spanish Female

Lucero Villegas de Ramirez

The "de" in lower-case letters indicates that the woman is married. Consequently, the control name is her husband's surname, "Ramirez". **NOTE:** There are some exceptions when the "de" is used to link two first names. See the following example:

First name: Lucero
Middle name:
Father's (her maiden) name: Villegas
Husband's surname: Ramirez
        Enter: Last name: Ramirez-Villegas de
                        First name: Lucero

Spanish speaking countries use the "de", "la", "los", "del" to link two first names to make it into one name, e.g., Maria **de** Jesus, Maria **de** Asencion, Maria **de la** Luz, Maria **de los** Angeles, Maria **del** Rosario, Maria **de** Atoche.

All the names linked with the **de, la, los, del,** mentioned above form one first name.

- Business names should be entered entirely in the Last Name box. Do not use the First Name or Middle Name box when entering business names.

- Do not use the ampersand sign for "and" unless it is part of a company name on the petition or pleading.

  B & D Company
  Cameron & Associates
  J&J Trucking

- Enter US and USA without any spaces.

  ☺ USDA   ☹ US Department of Agriculture
  ☺ US Trustee   ☹ United States Trustee

Style Conventions for Addresses

These style conventions apply to all debtor addresses and creditor matrix addresses entered in the CM/ECF application.

- Addresses must not exceed four (4) lines. The party name and address must not exceed five (5) lines.

- Abbreviate post office addresses without a space between the P O and B.

  POB 1359
  POB 34321 (POB for "drawer")

- Use digits for numbers in addresses.

  3224 E 26th St
  425 6th St
  1 Valley Plaza

- When there is a street address as well as a post office box address for a debtor, add only the post office address.

  John J Johnson
  POB 1477

4218 Elmwood Lane   *(Elimate this line)*
Bentonville AR 40453

- When needed, use the second and/or third line of the address for building name, suite number, floor, firm name, or attention.

  Arthur Andersen and Associates
  Attn Terri Brooks
  John Hancock Bldg #2600
  8723 Michigan Ave
  Chicago IL 60604

- The city, state, and zip code must be the only information on the last address line.

- Use the full nine-digit zip code if at all possible.

- Foreign addresses must have the full name of the post office and country of destination printed in capital letters.

- The country name or APO destination must be the only information on the bottom line of the address.

Alfonso Diaz	Sgt John Smith
Rio de Danubec y Rio Florido	C Company 237 Armor
CD JUAREZ CHIHUAHUA	Unit #21103 Box 512
MEXICO #1050	APO AE 09014

- If the address contains an apartment number or suite number, use the # sign in place of the word, number or suite.

  Barbara Bixby
  322 W Shady Ln #334
  Austin TX 78701

- Use c/o to indicate "In Care Of".

  Manuel Ortega Jr
  c/o Manuel Ortega Sr
  6612 E 6th St
  El Paso TX 79901

- The preferred format for telephone numbers is (210) 261-3851.

Creditor Matrix Specification

- Margins (top, bottom, left, right) should be at least one (1) inch.

- Each creditor must be separated by at least one blank line.

- Do not include page numbers, headers, footers, etc.

- All entries should conform to the style specifications in the Style Guide.

- The name and address of each creditor must be five (5) lines or less.

- The "name" line may contain no more than 50 characters including blanks.

- Each address line may contain no more than 40 characters including blanks.

- Names and addresses should be left justified (flush against the left margin, no leading blanks.)

- "Attention" lines should be placed on the second line of the name / address; e.g.,
    - Parker & Brooks
      Attn John Smith
      1510 Main St
      Boise ID 83702

- City, state, and zip code must be on the last line.

- All states must be the two-letter U.S. Postal Code abbreviations.

- Nine-digit zip codes must be typed with a hyphen separating the two groups of digits.

Abbreviations

States and Territories

AL	Alabama		MT	Montana
AK	Alaska		NE	Nebraska
AZ	Arizona		NV	Nevada
AR	Arkansas		NH	New Hampshire
AS	American Samoa		NJ	New Jersey
CA	California		NM	New Mexico
CO	Colorado		NY	New York
CT	Connecticut		NC	North Carolina
DE	Delaware		ND	North Dakota
DC	District of Columbia		CM	N. Mariana Isl.
FL	Florida		OH	Ohio
GA	Georgia		OK	Oklahoma
GU	Guam		OR	Oregon
HI	Hawaii		TT	Palau
ID	Idaho		PA	Pennsylvania
IL	Illinois		PR	Puerto Rico
IN	Indiana		RI	Rhode Island
IA	Iowa		SC	South Carolina
KS	Kansas		SD	South Dakota
KY	Kentucky		TN	Tennessee
LA	Louisiana		TX	Texas
ME	Maine		UT	Utah
TT	Marshall Island		VT	Vermont
MD	Maryland		VA	Virginia
MA	Massachusetts		VI	Virgin Islands
MX	Mexico		WA	Washington
MI	Michigan		WV	West Virginia
TT	Micronesia		WI	Wisconsin
MS	Mississippi		WY	Wyoming
MO	Missouri			

Geographic Directions

North	= N		Northeast	= NE
South	= S		Southwest	= SW
East	= E		Southeast	= SE
West	= W		Northwest	= NW

Business Abbreviations

Incorporated	Inc
International	Intl
Company	Co
Corporation	Corp
Association	Assn
Limited	Ltd
Limited Liability Partnership	LLP
Limited Liability Corporation	LLC
Associates	Assoc

Abbreviate addresses using the following:

Avenue	Ave
Boulevard	Blvd
Highway	Hwy
Interstate Highway	IH
Lane	Ln
Street	St
Road	Rd
Parkway	Pky
Rural Route	RR
Route	Rt
Highway Contractor	HC
Circle	Cir
Court	Ct
Place	Pl
Building	Bldg
Central	Cen
First	1st
Second	2nd
Third	3rd
Floor	Fl